

## Make a Bean House

Imagine having a bean-house in your garden, just big enough to play in and with leafy green walls made of bean-plants, with bright flowers and crisp French beans to eat. It's easy, first ask if you can use part of the vegetable garden, or, if you have one, make one in your own garden.

Before you start to build you need to prepare the soil a little, to make sure you have the greenest, most productive bean house ever! So work over the soil - make sure you get a grown-up to help if you are too small to use a garden fork. Add a bucketful of good, well-rooted compost. Mix the compost well into the soil.

There are two types of house you can build, one shaped like a tiny little cottage, is made of stout sticks in the corners and you will need help to lash the roof shape into place. Use string, held into the ground with wire pegs, to make nice dense walls.



Another shape is a simple wigwam, where you take about five to eight long pea-sticks and fix them firmly into the ground in a circle about 1.0m wide. Leave a gap in the front to make an entrance if you want to be able to go inside the wigwam without damaging the plants. Bunch the canes together at the top, and tie the top firmly with strong, lasting ties. For a wigwam style bean house that children can actually walk inside, use cane fishing poles instead of pea-sticks.

You can plant the bean seeds directly into the ground, or you can grow them in a pot and transplant them. A milk carton with the top cut off or several sheets of newspaper rolled around a can or carton and folded under all make good containers for seeds. Remove the carton on planting into the soil; the newspaper can be left as it will rot quickly.



## Bean Seedlings



Broad bean seeds are very large and will need to be planted more deeply than smaller, French beans. Plant a seed about 3cm each side of you wigwam canes, and each house support or string.

Plant your bean seedlings or bean seeds around the edge of the house. If planting seeds them plant three times as deep as the thickness of the seed.

Be careful when handling seedlings, like all babies they are so easily damaged. Don't hold them by the stalk or you could pull them out of the soil and damage their root system.

When your plants reach the top of the poles or house, take the growing tip between your fingers and pinch it out, this will encourage the plant to make beans not inches! Pick the beans every few days once they start to crop, and then they will keep growing beans for you all summer.

You can plant peas, either fresh green peas or snow peas instead of the beans, but beans grow taller than peas and will make your house more fun!

